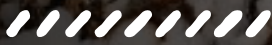


Agritourism case study

Goondiwindi Cotton, QLD



Location

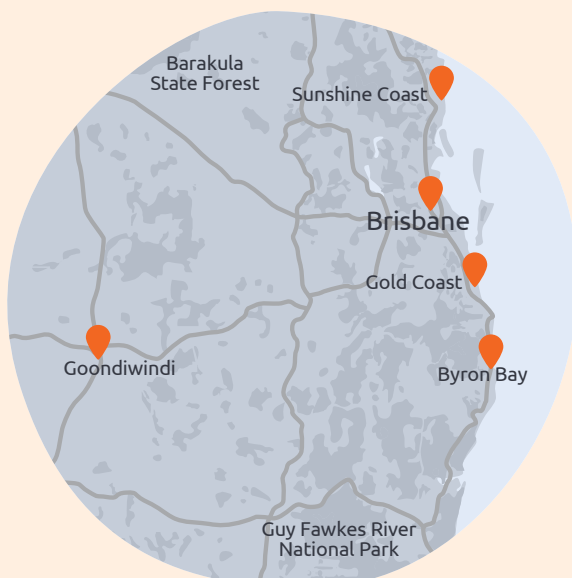
We're in Goondiwindi, Queensland, 350km South East of Brisbane on the New South Wales border.

Land tenure and primary business type

Agriculture, freehold. In addition to the Goondiwindi Cotton operation (5% of total operations), we farm cattle and grain.

Competitive advantages

- located along the NSW and QLD touring route for many 50+ caravan tourists
- cotton is something people don't usually see in the production stage, with interest growing across Australia and overseas
- Goondiwindi Cotton is an established and well-known Australian brand



Tourism offerings

- Goondiwindi Farm and Town Tours – a 3.5 hour guided bus tour showcasing the town of Goondiwindi and behind the scenes of Goondiwindi Cotton Farm. Includes cotton production through to fabric and fashion. Concludes with a visit to the fashion house and morning tea.
- Goondiwindi Art and Sculpture Tour – a guided bus tour of Goondiwindi town, showcasing the colourful local art, sculptures and history.



Growth journey

- the Coulton family commenced farming in the region in 1924 with an initial focus on sheep moving through cattle to grain and cotton
- in the early 1990s, Goondiwindi Cotton began life as a small garment manufacturing company, designed to diversify the family operation and add value to the local community
- tours started 15 years ago after an enquiry from the local caravan park based on interest from guests. Our very first bus tour was fully booked!
- today over 3,500 visitors go on the farm tour annually
- we now focus on sustainability; farm fill sustainability program returns end of life Goondiwindi Cotton garments back to the farm to aid soil health and reduce textile waste.

Future growth plans

We aim to establish an experience centre in town that educates visitors on the local agricultural industry with a 3D interpretive experience, an office space, a coffee shop and a sock machine so visitors can get a glimpse of how cotton can turn into a consumable product. This will further enhance our image of a high-quality experience and further promote Goondiwindi as an attractive visitor destination.

We also plan to increase our education market by developing a three-day agricultural education package. Student visits will further support the local economy through consumption of local products and services, while also providing educational opportunities generating future interest from young people in agriculture.

Viability and benefits of business

Goondiwindi Cotton has an annual turnover of \$6M and the tour costs the company around \$15-20K. Developing the tours wasn't about making additional revenue; it provides support and employment for the local town, creates marketing brand awareness of Goondiwindi Cotton and allows for education on the agricultural industry – all creating a positive impact on the town. Regional impact surveys have shown that 67% of visitors who participate in a Goondiwindi Cotton tour stay another night in Goondiwindi, which is good for the town and good for the local economy.

Advice to others looking to start a tourism business

- work together with your local community; if everyone is on board, more people will benefit
- undertake partnerships with local businesses e.g. our local bakery provides morning tea for the tour
- have the right people working with you who know tourism and look after your team. Being in a remote area means you can't just hire someone new
- you need to constantly diversify – environment changes, technology changes, visitor markets change
- you need dedication and to make a long-term commitment to deliver
- manners are exceptionally important
- education of where food comes from is so important
- tourism can create more jobs in town, giving the younger generation opportunities.

People don't realise the scale of agriculture can help educate and change perceptions.

